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Sacramental **THOUGHTS:**

OR,

A Looking-Glass for Communicants.

A

SERMON

PRESENTING

To View our *Blessed Saviour* in his
HUMILIATION and **TRIUMPH.**

Wherein is Open'd,

The **DUTY** and **BENEFIT** of Behold-
ing the *Lord Jesus Christ*, as he is held forth
in his Word and Ordinances, for the Re-
lief and Comfort both of Saints and Sinners.

By *S. ACTON.* *K*

*Isaiah 65. 1. I said, Behold me, behold me ! to
a Nation that was not called by my Name.*

The Second Edition.

CHESTER :

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T H E
DEDICATION.

Bretheren,



WHEN I was last at London, I had the Honour and Opportunity of giving Birth to the following Discourse in your Christian and Numerous Assembly, and an abundant Proof of your generous Acceptance of me and my Service: Not that I speak in respect of a Gift, for a Gift is not the End of my Labour in the Gospel of Christ; but your admitting me to communicate with you, which I esteem'd a Privilege much more valuable than Gold and Silver:

And being now prevail'd with to publish it (with a few Enlargements in transcribing it from my Notes) I cannot but in Gratitude confess it is your own, and will not suspect your Readiness to patronize it as such.

My End in presenting it to your Eye, is, That you and others may have a fresh View of the admirable Love of our Blessed Saviour display'd, in his unparallel'd Sufferings for us; and that all our Church-Members into whose Hands it comes; by rising early in the Morning of their Sacrament-Days, may read it over deliberately: which, with the Use of solemn Prayer to God, and his Blessing thereupon, will furnish them with such a Frame and Temper of Mind, as is requisite to a profitable Participation at the Lord's-Table, and that it may be successful for that End, my Prayer is, That you all may be establish'd in the Truth of the Gospel, and flourish in the Grace of him whom you have a Summons to behold, by

Namptwich,
Sep. 1717.

S. Acton.

A Looking-Glass for Communicants.

^A
S E R M O N
O P E N I N G

The Duty and Benefit of Beholding the Lord Jesus Christ, especially in the Lord's Supper.

FROM

John 19. 5. Behold the Man!

AS the prime and great Design of Sacraments is to furnish Religious and devout Persons with believing Sights of Christ, and a Heart-ravishing Sense of his Love and Favour to be imparted therein, according to his antient Promise, *That in all Places where he recorded his Name, he would come and Bless them, and that unto the End of the World:* So, I cannot but think our Words a very fit Subject for our present Discourse, since we are this Day purposed to attend our Lord in his Blessed Ordinance of the Supper, or Breaking of Bread in Remembrance of him; wherein there are Symbols us'd, that will present him in a lively manner to your believing Souls. Exod. 19. 24.

And as it is both the acknowledged Duty and Privilege of a Christian to have the Eye of his Faith fixed upon him, and to discern him at the Table, where you will, by the breaking of the Bread, and pouring forth of the Cup, be presented with the very picture of him, as he hung upon the Cross, when he made his Soul an Offering for Sin, by giving his Body to be broken, and his Blood to be shed for us: So a keeping him within our View with that sorrowful Countenance, and in that bruised, wounded, mangled, Mat. 29. 20.
1. Cor. 11. 29.
and

and bloody Condition he appeared to the *Jews* on the Cross at his Passion, and to believing Souls at the Table; will be very serviceable to furnish us with a Sight and Sense of the evil Nature of Sin, with a settled Displeasure to it; and will not fail to set our

Zech. 12.
10. *Hearts a mourning over him, whom our Sins have pierced.* It will mightily conduce to kindle in us a flaming and lasting Love to him, as his passion will appear to be nothing else but an Effect of his amazing Love to us unworthy Wretches.

Nay, therein we shall have a Sight of the rich Provisions that GOD has made for his People, which is CHRIST, with all the purchased Benefits of his Death, as Food prepared to Feed on; which we cannot taste, but the Soul will be fill'd with Joy in, and Thanksgiving to him: yea it will provoke us with our utmost Dilligence to labour against every Thing that may obstruct and damp our Sense thereof, and to endeavour whatever may propagate and further our Communion with, and Enjoyment of him. These are some of the many advantages which result and flow from Christ to the Soul that lives in a believing View of him: And that we may all so do, please to attend our Words, which present us with the Prospect of him, saying, *Behold the Man!*

These are the words of *Pilate*, which he spake to the malicious and merciless *Jews*, who were violent in their Prosecutions against our Blessed Saviour. He is now in their Hands, seiz'd by the Officers, who, once being sent for him, return'd without him, being charm'd with his Doctrine, and ravish'd with his gracious Words; insomuch, that when it was demanded why they had not brought him, they said, *Never*

John 7.
49. *Man spake like this Man.* But this is *their Hour*, and
Luke 22.
53. *the Power of Darknes.* Therefore he is haled away by the Soldiers to *Annas*; and from him was hurry'd to the High-Priest's Palace, where the Scribes and Elders were assembled, and by them was most invidious-ly

beholding Christ, the Man.

ly treated. He was mocked and taunted by some, reproach'd and villify'd by others, insulted, buffeted and spit upon by the Rabble; and not only examined by the High-Priest and Council, at whose bar he stood arraigned, but was judged and condemned worthy of Death, for no other reason than their Prejudice and Envy. Mat. 26. 57, 66.

Whereupon they dismiss him in the Posture of a Victim and capital Offender, sending him bound unto *Pilate* to be crucified. But *Pilate* the Governor, on a repeated Examination, proclaims his Innocency, saying, *I find no Fault in him*; therefore, as became a righteous Judge, would have had him released. But the *Jews* following him with their Clamour and Importunity, having chosen *Barrabbas*, a Thief and Murderer, to be released to them: *Pilate*, as one amaz'd at their Injustice and Inhumanity, demands of them, *If ye will have Barrabbas released, what shall I do with Jesus, which is called Christ?* Why, say they, *Crucify him.* But says *Pilate*, *what Evil hath he done? I find no cause of Death in him*; therefore *I will chastice him and let him go.* John 18. 38, 39, 40. And accordingly, in hope to put a stop to their Fury, and pacifying their Rage and Clamour, yea, and probably for his avoiding the great Evil of crucifying him, he exposed his sacred Body to be scourged. And now, by *Pilate's* Order, the Innocent *Jesus* is in the Hand, and at the Will of the *Roman Soldiers*; who, by severe Stripes from barbarous and unrelenting Men, had deep Furrows made in his Back. Mat. 27. 22, 23. But not satisfied therewith, they platted a Crown of Thorns, wherewith they pierced his blessed Head, Luke 22. 16, 21. they clothed him with a purple Robe, and put a Reed in his Righthand, which were the ridiculous Ensigns of Royalty; then they jeeringly deride him with a mock and reproachful Salutation, saying, *Hail, King of the Jews!* and smote him with their Hands. Mat. 27. 29, 30.

Now, as Scourging was the *Roman* Usage in punishing Malefactors, how *Pilate* could be innocent in ordering one who was no Criminal, but Innocency it self, to be scourged, I leave. However he brings

turn

him out unto them, if possible, to draw forth their Bowels of Pity and Compassion, and presents him to their View, sadly macerated in his Blood by the Indignities and ill Usage wherewith they had treated him, saying, *Behold the Man!*

In the Words you have something proposed to Observation, and that is, *The Man*; then you have him introduced with a Preface, *Behold the Man!* Or, First, you have a Call or Summons to attend unto something propos'd, *Behold*. Secondly, You have the Object presented, *The Man. Behold the Man!*

That Clemency and Compassion towards a miserable Object (which *Pilate* accounted our Blessed Saviour to be) should be found seated only in the Breast of a Barbarian; and that the *Jews*, void of all Bowels should so barbarously treat him whose End in coming into the World was principally their Good and Profit, is strange! Especially if we consider that they were a People happy above all others, as he was pleas'd to grant them his personal Presence, and his very instructive Life; as he made them the Auditors of his divine and incomparable Discourses, the Witnesses of his Miracles, and the principal Sharers in the many and valuable Benefits he bestowed while he liv'd on the Earth. These and such like Things consider'd, and the very unsuitable Treatment he receiv'd from them, argue no less than that they were abandon'd of GOD, bereav'd of their Reason, and wholly resolv'd, from their Envy and Malice, to persecute him to Death.

But perhaps you may say, What does this concern us? I answer, Much, very much: For though we were not personally engag'd with the *Jews* to betray, to seize and accuse him, to judge and condemn him to vote against him, and to crucify him; yet had we been present, as the *Jews* were, 'tis odds we had play'd the same Game. For I know not that Sin has left us one Jot better-natur'd than the *Jews* were; and that our domineering and base Lusts would have ren-

beholding Christ the Man.

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render'd us as manifest and notorious Enemies both to Christ and our selves, as they were; which we may guess from the settled Displeasure Men generally express to that Holiness, which Christ came into the World to advance. But though our Hand was not upon him, yet it was for our sakes, no less than for theirs, *that he gave his Back to the Smiters, and his Cheeks to him that plucked off the Hair: Our Iniquities were laid upon him, and he freely suffered that Wrath which was due unto us, that by his Stripes we might be healed.* He offer'd himself a Sacrifice to GOD 'tis true, but it was for us, for our Sin, and not his own; for *he did no Sin neither was Guile found in his Mouth.* He had none to suffer for, otherwise than as the Sins of the World were charged upon and imputed to him, which he was contented to account for. Though the Messiah, as the Prophet Daniel tells us, *must be cut off*, yet it was not for himself. How painful and dolorous soever his condition was, and indeed his Pains were sharper than Men and Devils could invent or inflict, as appear'd on his crying out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* that he was reject-ed of Men, and forsaken of his Friends, was sad: But the heaviest Weight wherewith he was pressed, and the hottest Wrath he endured, was that of his Father: That was the Dregs in the Cup, and did most sensibly affect and deeply pierce him. But whatever he sustain'd, it was all for our sake: *He bore our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows.* And if ever we experience in the Joy of our Hearts our Sins pardon-ed, our Guilt removed, our Filth purged, our Per-sons justified, our Services accepted, and our Souls saved, it must be by the Apprehension and Applicati-on of Christ to our otherwise Perishing and miser-able Souls. Therefore *Behold the Man!* From whence I conclude, by way of Observation,

Doct. *That it is the Duty and Privilege of all Men, whether Jews or Gentiles, Saints or Sinners, to behold the Lord Jesus Christ.*

This

8 *The Duty and Benefit of*

This as you have heard already, is of the highest Moment: And there is not any Thing our Blessed Saviour (personated by the Prophet) did more affectionately and earnestly Court and sollicite both *Jews* and *Gentiles* unto, than this; as you have him saying, *Behold me, behold me! to a Nation that was not called by my Name*, that is, the *Gentiles*. And this Ingemination or Doubling of his Invitation evinceth to us the Earnestness of his Desire, and the Necessity of the Thing. For which End he was manifested in the World, where he liv'd a very admirable and beneficial Life; whose Doctrine, Miracles, and Conversation, gave proof unto all, who either saw or heard of him, that he was one every way worthy to be beheld, loved and received; who after he had finished the work of his Life, gave himself (as an Effect of his Father's Love and his own Grace) for a lost World, to be lifted up upon the Cross, as *Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness*; that he might be exposed to every Man's View, and be presented an Object to every Man's Faith, that Sinners seeing and believing on him, might not Perish, but have Everlasting Life. Therefore *Behold the Man*. In speaking to the Words, we shall do these three Things.

II. 65. 1.

Joh. 3.
16.

First, We shall enquire what we may understand by this Term, *Behold*; the Preface by which our Saviour is introduced and presented to our View.

Secondly, We shall shew you in what Respects, State, and Condition, it is our Duty and Privilege to behold our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, We shall shew the happy Influence a right Beholding of our Lord Jesus Christ will have upon our Hearts and Lives.

But, *First*, We are to enquire what may be understood by this Term, *Behold*, and what it imports. There is a threefold Beholding of an Object;

1st, A Corporeal Beholding, or a Looking with our bodily Eyes on some Person or Thing visible and obvious to our View, that we may have a distinct and full

beholding Christ the Man.

full Sight of it. Thus *Pilate* calls upon the Envious and Incompassionate *Jews* to *Behold the Man*. And the Baptist to his Auditors, seeing *Christ* coming to his Baptism, said, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the World.* Joh. 1. 29, 36.

2dly, There is a Mental Beholding of a Thing; which is a Thinking on or Pondering in our Minds somewhat propos'd to our Consideration. *Behold*, says the Apostle, *the Goodness and Severity of GOD.* Rom. 11. 22. *On them which sell, Severity; but towards thee, Goodness,* (Now mark) *if thou continue in his Goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.* Consider it: For what can be more worthy to employ our active Minds and Thoughts upon, than what he here proposes to us to ruminate and Behold?

3dly, There is a Practical Beholding; as a Limner, who nicely and narrowly observes and beholds the Features and Lineaments of the Face he draws; or as Scholars behold the Copy they transcribe and write after; or as Soldiers under Discipline behold their Commander, the Child his Father, the Servant his Lord, to resemble and imitate as their Pattern and Example. So we must, as you'll hear anon, as *Pilate* said to the *Jews*, *Behold the Man.*

But further; *Behold* is a Word of Signification, and is used for divers Purposes in the Holy Scriptures; where you may often find it a Note to raise our Admiration, as by beholding we often see in Persons and Things Cause and Matter of Wonder. Thus *Elihu*, *Remember that thou magnify the Works which Men behold,* Job 36. 24. *i.e.* which Men behold and admire. So the Apostle, *Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the Sons of God!* Joh. 3. 1. Who can seriously think of this Love, and not admire it? That God, infinitely blessed in himself, whom Angels admire, and adore, should, after our many Sins and high Provocations, be reconciled to us, and take such vile Dust as we are into the Relation of Children; a Relation more endearing than that which Blessed Angels

Angels stand in to him. This is Love fit to be admired; for it cannot be comprehended.

Again; It's a Note that calls for our Attention, as presenting to our Eyes or Minds something well worthy to be attended or hearkened to: *Behold*, says Rev. 3: 20. Christ, *I stand at the Door, and knock: If any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come in, and sup with him and he with me.* And doubtless there is not any Thing which concerns us more to attend unto as we are Sinners, and at the Point of perishing, than this.

Likewise it's a Note of Caution; wherby we should be warned from doing any thing wilfully or heedlessly, that may be hurtful or pernicious to us. And so it's to be understood by our Saviour to the impotent Man, whom he had healed, and meeting with him after in the Temple, says, *Behold thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse Thing come unto thee.* Whether this Man had brought himself under so great an Infirmary by a vicious Course of Living, I will not determine, though that is probable, since our Lord here cautions him to take heed: *Behold, sin no more; lest something worse than thy late Infirmary should befall thee.*

Also *Behold* is a Note by which the Holy Ghost would incline and affectionately move us to lay hold upon, and carefully to improve for our Good, Seasons and Opportunities we are intrusted with for that purpose. So the Apostle uses it, *Behold this is the acceptable Time: Behold now is the Day of Salvation.* 2 Cor. 6: 1, 2. For which Reason, together with the Uncertainty of a Morrow, it is requisite we improve wisely and Faithfully our present Time, for so happy an End. Prov. 27: 1.

And sometimes it is used to excite Pity, and to move Compassion in the Breasts of those who are Spectators of an afflicted and miserable Object. Therefore *Pilate* brings forth Christ to the merciless Jews, bleeding under those causeless Barbarities their inhuman and malicious Prosecutions had procur'd to him, saying, *Behold the Man!* And

And I am persuaded this *Behold*, as it stands in relation to Christ, hath all these Significations to be attributed to it; which will appear, if we consider briefly, Who, and what a Man Christ was when he was in the World. And in a Word, he was truly a Man, had all the Parts and Nature of Man, a Man manifest in the World; of whom we may truly say, the World was not worthy. He was the most inoffensive Man *Seperate from Sin and Sinners*: A Man in whom no Fault could be found, on the most nice and critical Search that was possible to be made. Therefore *Pilate*, who had examined him all manner of ways, yea, and by Scourging, which he had no Commission for, avouches his Innocency, saying, *I find no Fault in him*. A Man most loving and generous, *who went about doing Good*, toiling and wearying himself there-with. So generous and beneficial was he, that he continued to exert himself in performing all Services and good Offices for the Relief and Comfort of poor Diseased, Blind, Lame, Unclean, and Possessed Creatures; and that under high Provocations to the contrary, even while many interpreted his mighty and merciful Acts not to be the Effects of the Power of God, but of the Devil; suffering patiently the Contradiction of Sinners against himself.

Heb. 7.
26.

Acts 10.
38.

Mat. 12.
24.
Heb. 12.
3:

Nay, He was a Man, and more than a Man, and as truly partook of the Divine Nature as he did of the Human, and was God-Man in one Person, therefore called our *Emanuel*; *Whose goings forth hath been from Everlasting*; not only in Creating, (for without him was not any Thing made that was made, in Heaven above, or in Earth beneath) but in Redeeming, and Governing a sinful and ungrateful World: *By whom all Things consist*; tho' ungratefully he's dealt with in the World, as it would strip him of his chief Excellency, the Divine Nature, denying him to be as truly the Son of God as the Son of Man, notwithstanding the Father attests from Heaven, in the Audience of credible Witnesses, that he was the Begotten, the only Begotten, his

Mat. 1. 13.
Mic. 5. 2.
Joh. 1. 3.
Col. 1. 16.
17.

Mat. 3. his Son, his dearly beloved Son, in whom he was well
 17. pleased, It was his owning of this, that cost him his
 Ch. 17. Life; for, say the blind and malignant Jews to Pi-
 5. late, He made himself the Son of God: And this they
 Mark 14. urge as a Reason why he should crucify him. This
 62. they charg'd upon him as Blasphemy; and for that
 Joh. 19. cause they condemn'd him, and add, saying, We have
 7. a Law, and by our Law he ought to die. What they
 further advanc'd and charg'd him with, as being a
 Traitor to Caesar, since he had made himself a King,
 was what they did not much regard, farther than to
 force Pilate into their Measures; and to fall in with
 their wicked and hellish Design of crucifying him
 as a seditious Rebel, and an Enemy to Church and
 State: But I say, that which the Jews stomach'd
 most, was his making himself the Son of God; and
 for that they would never forgive him.

And truly, were he in the World now in the
 same State and Circumstance he was then, it may be
 thought he would not meet with much kinder En-
 tertainment from many (who manifestly slight his
 Authority, reject his Word, and cast off the Obser-
 vance of those Ordinances which he himself Insti-
 tuted, and his Word supports both as to the Matter
 and Form of them, for establishing the Traditions of
 Men; or that dare deny his Divinity against the
 Stream and Force of such Evidence) than he did
 from the Jews, for making himself the Son of God.

Now behold the Man. And may it not be for Ad-
 miration that ever the Jews, who had undeniable
 and ocular Proofs of his Divinity, in that he both ac-
 ted and spake as never Man did, should suffer their
 Prejudice and Malice to draw from 'em such vehe-
 ment Cries to crucify him, and entail the Blood of the
 Son of God upon them and their Posterity? Is not
 such a Man as this worthy to be attended and con-
 sider'd by us in his Person, Nature, and Offices, who
 under the most malicious Contradictions, did not de-
 cline in his Love to us and our Interest? Shall we not
 be caution'd on beholding such a Man as this, who

is able to raise the Dead at his Pleasure, and had the Angelical Powers at his Command and Service against all Sin; since the Reason why we are not sunk into Misery is wholly from his Patience, and not from his Impotency? Much more shall not the Sight of a Man so benign as our Jesus was, suffering without Cause all that cruel and barbarous Usage of the violent Jews so patiently, excite Pity, and draw Compassion from the most flinty Breast? Sure it would have melted his most harden'd and merciless Enemies, were it not that Envy is never weary of reiterating its Cruelties, until it has obtain'd its Ends. The Wise Man tells us, *Wrath is cruel, and Anger is outrageous; but who can stand before Envy?* Not Innocency it self. I now pass to the

Pro. 27.
4.

Second Thing proposed; which is, To shew in what Respects, State and Condition, it is our Duty and Privilege to behold the Lord Jesus Christ. And it's fit we should behold him in this sevenfold Respect.

(1.) In his Incarnation and Birth. A Thing so stupendious, as cannot be thought of without raising our Wonder to the highest pitch; That Christ, the Son of God by Nature, the second Person in the Glorious Trinity, who was the Eternal Delight of his Father, should condescend to become incarnate, by his assuming to his Divine the Human Nature, and of being born of the Blessed Virgin; by which means he took to himself a Body, became Flesh, and dwelt among us, and was truly God-Man in one Person! This Truth is abundantly confirm'd and ratified in holy Scripture, and on that account is acknowledged a grand Article of the Christian Faith (and that deservedly :) For tho' it be denied and contested by some Persons on Account of its Unreducibleness to our Reason, it being too immense to be comprehended within the Grasps and Limits of finite Understandings; yet their Unbelief can never disannul or make void the Truth of God in that particular. The Testimony of God in his Word is a sufficient Ground

Rom. 3.3.

Gal. 3.

for

17.

- for our Faith, tho the Thing it self be too mysterious to be fully conceiv'd of by human Creatures; else what must we think of Regeneration by the Word, or *being born again*? Which was every wit as great a Riddle, and unintelligible to *Nicodemus*; who, tho a Man of great Learning and Sense, queries with our Blessed Saviour once and again, saying, *How can these Things be*? And what shall we think of the general Resurrection of the Dead in the End of the World? Why it is what will puzzle the greatest Wit, and nonplus the most consummate Reason of Man to conceive of; yet I know not any worthy of the Christian Name that denies it. Nor do I understand that they are one jot more worthy of it that deny the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus; for notwithstanding the Contradiction of shallow Mortals, the inspir'd Apostle tells us, *That without Controversy great was the Mystery of Godliness; God was manifest in the Flesh, &c.* The Grace of God herein does not only exceed the Understanding of Man, but it is the Wonder of blessed Angels, as it is that, with the happy Consequents of it, *they desire to* (pry and) *look into.* How much more may it raise in us Admiration and Wonder, That the Divine Nature should be clothed with Flesh! That the Creator of all Things should be created, and humbled beneath the Rank of those in whose Likeness he was made! That the Delight of God, should be the Abhor'd of Men! That *David's Lord and Root*, should become *his Son and Offspring*! That God should become Incarnate, and, by taking Flesh upon him, should become Man! This is certain, tho' strange and undemonstrable to human Reason. Therefore *Behold the Man!* Consider and believe it.
- (2.) We must behold him in his Life, to imitate him as our great Pattern and Example, who was not only a Divine Person, but a Man most perfect in all Virtue; therefore most worthy to be resembled, and, as a Leader, to be followed by us:
- As St. Paul intimates to the Saints at *Corinth*, willing them

Joh. 3. 4.
9.

1 Tim. 3.
16.

1 Pet. 1.
12.

Mat. 22.
45.

Rev. 22.
16.

1 Pet. 2.
21.

1 Cor.
31. 1;

them

them to be Followers of him, no otherwise than as he was a Follower of Christ; who is often propos'd an Example to us, that we might do, even as he himself had done before us. Who ever lov'd God, either in Truth or Degree, as Christ did, giving undeniable Proofs thereof by a cheerful Doing and a patient Suffering his whole Will? Who so courteous and kind in his whole Converse with Men, so free from Sourness and ill Temper, so condescending and benign, that he denied not his Company to the most Poor and Indigent, no, nor to the greatest Sinners, for their Profit? How meek and gentle was he under high Provocations, from the great Unkindness he met with for all his Grace and Good-will towards them? Insomuch that his Disciples, fill'd with Displeasure at the Inhospitable Samaritans, would have been permitted to call for Fire from Heaven to destroy 'em. But then, how calmly and lovingly does he check their wrathful Motions? telling them, *They know not what manner of Spirit they are of*; that they are quite mistaken in the End of his coming into the World, which was not to destroy Mens Lives, but to save them. How humble and lowly in Spirit, notwithstanding his supreme Dignity and Excellency? How admirable in Self-denial? And how far from pleasing himself; to which he always prefer'd the Glory of God, and the Good of Sinners? How high in Contempt of the World, who trampled upon the Glories of it, as not worthy of his Esteem? Tho' he never slighted the Persons of any who had the Things of the World in possession, but rather treated 'em with a Respect suitable to their Quality; yet he himself never regard'd 'em farther than they were necessary to Nature: Yea, how perfectly submissive, and entirely resign'd, was he to the disposing Will of God? Behold and imitate him herein; which to do will crown us with such an Excellency, which otherwise we shall never be able to attain: It will render us more truly inoffensive and fruitful in all Virtue and Goodness, than the utmost Strains in Philosophy or Morality can do.

There-

Luk 9.
55. 56.

Therefore behold the Man, imitate him as your great Example.

- (3.) Behold him at his Arraignment and Trial! The angry and envious Jews had often desir'd an Opportunity to seize him: Well, now they have him; and they resolve to make sure and quick Work with him; Their Council sits in Judgment upon; and condemns him. And that being done, because they
- John 18. 28. could not (as they pretend) put him to death, it being the Preparation for the Passover, they send him bound to Pilate the Governor. Whereupon Pilate requires *what Accusation they had against him*; judging it unreasonable they should send a Prisoner to his Bar without signifying his Crime. To which
- Ver. 29. they reply, *If he were not a Malafactor, we would not have deliver'd him up unto thee.* Thus by their crafty Insinuation (whereby they would cover their Malice and horrid Impiety) they traduce Innocence it self, and impose upon Pilate, to make him their Tool. Well, Pilate proceeds to examine him, and tells them
- Ver. 40. once and again, *That he finds no Fault in him*; and would have deliver'd him, as his Custom was to release a Prisoner to 'em at the Passover. But by the
- Mat. 26. 18. Instigation of the Priests and Elders, they all voted against him, and chose Barabbas, who was a Thief and Murtherer, to be released unto them. Now Pilate griev'd, Perceiving the Jews for Envy had deliver'd him up, proceeds to scourge him, that by inflicting a lighter Punishment, he hoped thereby to appease their Rage, and prevail that he might be released, since no Fault could be found in him. But alas! so far from that, that all Means us'd in his favour did but edge their Malice, and make both Priest and People more loud and clamorous in their Cry to crucify him. Why, says Pilate, *What has he done?* I find no Fault in him. Why, say they *He made himself the Son of God*; and we have try'd him thereupon, and condemn'd him to die for his Sedition and Blasphemy, of which (to us) he appeared to be guilty. But if this be not sufficient to prevail with thee

to crucify him, we have this further to charge him with, That he made himself a King; he is therefore an Enemy to *Cæsar*, guilty of Treason; and in a daring manner then said, *If thou let this Man go, thou art not Cæsar's Friend.* Whereby they work'd upon his Fear, and prevail'd with *Pilate* at last, against the the Sense of his own Mind, and otherwise than became a just Judge, to deliver him to their Will.

But before I leave this, we shall make this three-fold Remark upon these violent Proceedings with our Blessed Saviour, manag'd by a promiscuous Croud, an enraged Mob, to wit, the Priests and People. The

1st is, Their great Ingratitude and Baseness. VVhat did he ever do, at which they might justly be angry in the least degree, much less that their Malice and Rage should thus be moved? VVas not his whole Life a continued Act of Kindness and Charity both to the Souls and Bodies of Men, and sufficient to have endear'd him unto 'em in the highest degree? Therefore their Ingratitude was very great.

2^{dly}, Their Injustice is no less remarkable, and more than evident, if such a Thing can be, from their want of Proof, seeking VVitneses, and labouring to patch up an Evidence against him, right or wrong. But tho' they procured many false VVitneses, yet they so apparently disagreed in their Evidence, that what they offer'd, amounted to no legal Proof, so that his Innocency stands yet untainted. Also from the repeated Testimonies of his Judge, *That he could find no Fault in him*; which was an Infallible Proof of his Innocency. However, one Thing more will make it uncontestable; which is the Confession of *Judas*, the Traitor, who treacherously betray'd him into the hands of his Enemies: And after they had condemn'd him, he fell under the Smitings of his own Heart, the Recoilings of his own guilty Conscience, which furnished him with a cutting Sense of what he had done; and being full of Horror and Confusion, goes to the Chief Priests and Elders, throws down (with Indignation) the thirty Pieces of Silver, saying, *I have sinned in that I have betrayed Innocent Blood.* But the *Mat. 3*

Mark. 14. 62. **3^d** Thing I would observe, is, The Guilt and Curse they brought upon themselves thereby : For if he really was the Son of God, as he said he was, and as God from Heaven and the Holy Ghost declared he was, then their Guilt must needs be very great in an unjust condemning of him ; as may be guessed by the Punishment they are under, whose Habitation is now desolate, being a vagabond People scatter'd and dispers'd in all Nations, suffering under the Guilt of sacred Blood, which their Ancestors entail'd on themselves and their Children. And O that they would once lay it to Heart, that they would reflect on their Sins, and *Behold the Man !* But to proceed.

Mat. 3. 17. Ch. 27:25:

(4.) We must behold him in his Crucifixion and Death. Let us accompany him from the Bar to the Cross, from his Condemnation to his Crucifixion, and not to leave him, nor forsake him. In the Particular before, you have him despised and rejected of Men : Here you have him a Man of Sorrows, bruised and broken under the Weight of our Sins, his Enemies Malice, and his Father's Wrath. He's now lifted up, as *Moses* lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness, that every poor Sinner, stung and wounded by the infernal Serpent, might behold him for their Relief and Cure. Here you have him wounded in the House of his Friends ; and those that had eat of his Bread lifting up the Heel against him : And such to whom he had been most indulgently kind, not only voting against, and crying out, *Crucify him* ; but in Fact, murdering with their own Hands the Lord of Life and Glory. Here you have his Visage marr'd, who was altogether lovely ; and your Saviour suffering the most exquisite Pains of the Cross, to which his Hands and Feet were nailed, his Side pierced and gored with the Spear, letting out that precious Blood by which Sin is expiated, and is in truth the alone Price of our Redemption. Here you have in his Wounds a Window open'd, through which you may look into his very Heart, and read a Lecture of Love (by Faith) of Love stronger than Death. Here
your

you may (if Believers) read your own Peace in his Trouble, your Justification in his Condemnation, your Reconciliation in his Blood, and your Life in his Death. Therefore *Behold the Man!*

(5.) We must behold him in the Ministry of his Word and Ordinances. As our Reconciliation and Peace is founded in the Blood of Christ, our great Sacrifice; so it is his Death that gives Rise and Being to the Doctrine and Grace of the Gospel: And the great Design of the Gospel-Ministry is, to proclaim God in Christ, reconciled to every Penitent and believing Sinner, and to persuade a frantick and malignant World to be reconciled to God by Jesus Christ. Christ, and what he hath done as our Mediator, is the great Subject of the Gospel: In the Ministry whereof he is held forth to Sinners, as the only Object to be believed on, for Remission and Justification; as St. Paul intimates, who blessing God with the rest of his Fellows, *Who always causeth us (says he) to triumph in Christ, for making manifest the Savour of the Knowledge of Christ by us in every Place.* With whom all faithful Ministers can truly say, *We preach not our selves, but Christ crucify'd.* And though the Prejudic'd may stumble as the Jews did, and learned Heads may account (with the Greeks) Gospel-Preaching to be but Foolishness; yet to them who believe, *Christ is the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God; to them he is the sweet Saviour of Life, but to others he is the Saviour of Death unto Death.* Sirs, every Sermon that we preach, and you hear, if Christ be not some way made manifest by it, and apprehend by the Soul, 'tis lost, and becomes unfruitful.

So also in all his Ordinances we must behold him; otherwise they will be but Wells without Water, and Breasts without Milk: For though the Ordinances of Christ are great Blessings, as they are the Signs of his Presence with his People; yet 'tis certain that Ordinances are Blessings no farther than Christ is apprehended and enjoy'd in them. What an insipid Thing is Reading and Thinking, where Christ is not the Subject? Men may perhaps say,

2 Cor 5.
18, 16.

Acts, 4.
12.

2 Cor. 2.
14.

1 Cor 1.
23, 24.

Eph. 3, 8.

2 Cor. 2.
15, 16

- Thereby they gain Knowledge which render 'em meet for, and pleasant in Conversation: But what do they purchase thereby? And what is the Fruit of their Labour, *but Grief and Sorrow*, as the wise *Solomon* tells us, How unprofitable is Prayer, tho' perform'd with Eloquence of Expression, and all imaginable Shews of Devotion, if it be not in Christ's Name?
- Eccl. 1. 18. And how flat to the Ground will the highest-raisd Praises of Mortals fall, if not offer'd up to God by Jesus Christ.
- Heb. 13. 15. In Baptism also we are to behold the Lord Jesus as it is Faith in him that qualifies the Soul for Baptism; by whose Authority, and in whose Name it is to be administer'd, wherein the Believer is said to put on Christ, and to be planted together with him, in the Likeness both of his Death and Resurrection.
- Acts 8. 36. 37. Mat. 28. 18, 19. Gal. 3. 27. Rom. 6. 4 5.

And in the Lord's-Supper, especially, we are to behold him: In which Ordinance you have every Thing order'd and dispos'd for that Purpose. As Luke 22. 19. Christ is declared to be the alone Author and Instructor of it, so by his Command it is to be solemniz'd; who said, *Do this*: And the only End in doing of it, is in Remembrance of him. Here you have the very Picture of him, as he hung upon the Cross: by breaking the Bread, you have a lively Representation of his Body rent and torn by the Nails, and Spear that pierced him; and by the pouring forth of the Wine, the shedding of his Blood. We eat the Bread and drink the Wine, as Signs of Christ. In which Acts we must labour by Faith to get lively Apprehensions of him, who under those Elements is presented to us, as the only spiritual Nourishment of a Believing Soul; whom not to discern as the Matter and Subject of this Holy Rite, will render so excellent an Ordinance not only fruitless, but of fatal Consequence, to them who partake therein unworthily: And they are such, in our Appostle's Judgment, who at the Table discern not the Lord's Body. Therefore behold the Man, who on the Cross sealed his Love to, and gave himself for us; but in the Supper gives himself, with all his purchased Benefits to us.

(6.) Behold him as risen, ascended up to Heaven, and set down there at the Right-hand of God for us. And here is enough to ravish our Hearts, and to engage us whilst we have a Being to *behold the Man*, who in his Death was a Conqueror. He nailed our Sins, together with those Ordinances that were against us, to his Cross: He spoiled Principalities and Powers, making a Shew of them openly. Yea, he seized the Spoil of his Enemies, and snatched us captive Wretches out of the Hands of the Devil. His Resurrection is the Proof and Evidence of his Victory, as thereby he hath broken the Power of Death and the Grave, which is said to be our *last Enemy*. He's now return'd to the Field of Battel, of which he remains sole Master, none of his Enemies being able to rally, or to renew the Combat with him; and his Ascension is his Triumph over them.

Col. 2.
14.

O how desirous are Men usually, and who would not croud to behold their Conquering General riding in Triumph on his Return from the Battle with the Spoil of his Enemies, and they his Captives tied to his Chariot-wheels? Who will not shout and triumph, celebrate and praise his Courage and Conduct, and welcome him with their loud and joyful Acclamations? Why then *behold the Man!* The Captain of your Salvation, who came from Heaven to fight your Battles for you! Who has conquer'd your Enemies, seiz'd their Spoils, and is triumphantly leading Captivity Captive! Behold him ascending in the bright Clouds, as in his glorious and triumphant Chariot! His Disciples most intently did so; Acts 1. 11: even so do ye: And not only ascending, but as enter'd into Heaven, and there possess with all the Treasures of Grace, the Fulness of the Godhead, from Eph. 4. 8: whence (like himself) *he gives Gifts unto Men, yea to the rebellious!* Behold him enter'd into Heaven, not only as your Conquering Lord, but as your Head and Forerunner, to take possession of that blessed Region in our Nature, and for us! And not only so, but in regard to our Imperfection and Weakness, is set down as our High-Priest at the Right-hand of God,

Psal. 68.
18.

Heb. 6.
20.

to make Intercession for us; yea, to present the Names, Persons, and imperfect Services of his sincere Servants in the Center of his own Worthiness, and perfume all with the Odours of his own Righteousness and Merit; by which means God smells a sweet Saviour in them, that otherwise would yield nothing but filthy Stench, arising from a reeking and loathsome Puddle of Corruption! The Apostle John proposes this as a ground of great Encouragement and Comfort to the Saints, telling us, *That if any Man sin, (i. e. through Weakness and Infirmity) we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. Therefore behold the Man!* Consider him, and the Obligations you are under to him; accordingly employ your selves in the serious Studies and Exercises of Religion and Godliness, and not in carnal Sports, and feasting the Flesh, as the generality do. This would be to make him a very unsuitable Return for all his Grace, and to be very unlike him and his Disciples; who in the forty Days, from his Resurrection to his Ascension, convers'd of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. A very different Exercise to that which a vain World is employed in.

(7.) And lastly, we must behold him as coming again from Heaven, as our Judge and Rewarder: Who, so sure as he is ascended and gone into Heaven, will return from thence, as the Angels told his Disciples in Galilee, on their Master's Ascent and Leaving of them. This our Saviour himself intimated frequently to his Auditors in the Course of his Doctrine; and was what he told his prejudic'd Enemies. And as he will come certainly, so he will come quickly, let Scoffers and Despisers of Christ and his Doctrine say and think what they please concerning the Promise of his coming. Tho' they may tell us it's a mere Dream and Chimera, the fond Fancies of a Brain-sick People, and what proceeds from Enthusiasm, and the like; yet these wild Conceits of theirs render the coming of Christ not the less certain, nor set it at a farther distance, who, notwithstanding all their groundless and extravagant Suggestions, says, *Surely I come quick-*

quickly: Yea, he will come visibly, open to the View of every Man, good and bad; *Every Eye shall see him*, even those that peirc'd him. Many will not behold him now in a way of Duty, though a believing Sight of him in the Displays of his Grace would fill the Soul with Rapture and Joy. But at his second coming they must, they shall behold him; and a dreadful sight it will be, to behold him clothed with flames, coming to take Vengeance on all unthinking and unready Souls.

Rev. 22.
20.
Ch. 1. 6.

Theff.
1. 8.

If any ask, Wherefore will Christ come again? We answer, *First*, He will come to judge the World in Righteousness, very different from the Proceeding of those who sat upon and condemn'd him without cause; but he will judge according as God hath appointed, which is, in Righteousness. *Secondly*, To render a recompence to every Man according to his Works: For, says he, *Behold I come quickly and my Reward is with me, to give to every Man as his work shall be*. He will then make a thorough Search into, and rightly understand the State of every Man's Heart and ways. Then will he convince all bold and daring Sinners of all their ungodly Deeds committed by 'em, and of all their hard Speeches belch'd forth against him, his Ways and People. Then will he slay those his Enemies, that would not by the Charms of his Grace be prevail'd on to submit themselves to his Government. He'll punish them with an everlasting Destruction, doom them to a perpetual Exile, banish them from his Presence to traverse the dark Territories of Hell's Regions, where they must dwell with Devils, and be miserably tormented by and with them. This must be the Portion of their Cup, who, upon the Scrutiny, are found to be his Enemies; and such he will deem every Man and Woman to be, who have not only voted against him, but such as have lived carelessly, and died impenitently, as well the Neglectors of their Duty, as the Contemners of his Laws. But to the Righteous, and such as look for him, desirous of his Return, (as being the Joy of their Heart) he will appear for their

Acts 17.
12.
Rev. 22.
12.

Consolation, take them into his Embraces, lodge them in his Bosom, put them into the Vision of his Glory, and shall with himself enjoy a *Kingdom prepared before the Foundation of the World*. This is the Reward that Christ will give 'em, where they shall be blessed and happy above all Expression. Thus I have shewed you in what Respects, State and Condition, it is our Duty to behold the Lord Jesus Christ; wherein we may by Faith, as in a Glass, (or through the Lattice) see him, though not so clearly as blessed Souls shall do in the open Vision of Heaven; for

1 John 3. there they shall behold him Face to Face, and see him
2. as he is. I now pass to the

Third Thing proposed; which is, To shew you the happy Influence a due performance of this Duty will have upon our Hearts and Life; which will make it evident that it's no less our Privilege to *behold the Man*, than it is our Duty. For it will,

(1.) Furnish us with abundant Matter and Cause of Admiration and Praise. Is it possible on Reflection to behold the Father, in pure Love and Mercy towards us Sinners, parting with and divesting himself of the Darling of his Soul, (as it were) casting out of his Bosom Christ his Dearly-beloved, who was the eternal Delight of his Father? Can we behold the Son, equal with God, laying down his Crown, disrobing himself of all the Ensigns of Majesty and Glory *he had with the Father before the World was*, emptying himself of the Riches of his Deity; quitting the Adorations of blessed Angels, and abasing himself by coming to live a Life on Earth mean and poor; and in his Humiliation, to submit himself to the Insults and cruel Usage of base Men, nay, to a cursed and shameful Death for our sakes, and to work out Redemption for us, that we might be made Partakers of the Riches of his Grace here, and be put into the Bosom of eternal Love, to inherit the ineffable Joys of his Presence for ever? Can we, I say, reflect on these Things, and not be astonished, and cry out, O Grace unmeasurable! Who can think of it without being rais'd by the Wonders of it to

John 17. *was*, emptying himself of the Riches of his Deity;
2 Cor. 8. quitting the Adorations of blessed Angels, and abasing himself by coming to live a Life on Earth mean and poor;
9. and in his Humiliation, to submit himself to the Insults and cruel Usage of base Men, nay, to a cursed and shameful Death for our sakes, and to work out Redemption for us, that we might be made Partakers of the Riches of his Grace here, and be put into the Bosom of eternal Love, to inherit the ineffable Joys of his Presence for ever? Can we, I say, reflect on these Things, and not be astonished, and cry out, O Grace unmeasurable! Who can think of it without being rais'd by the Wonders of it to

Eph. 1. 5.
1 Pet. 1. 3, 4.

Admiration and Praise ! Who can speak of it with-
out a Doxology, as *Paul* and *Peter* did, and all the
Saints both in Earth and Heaven do ?

Rev. 4. 9.
10.
Ch. 5: 12.

(2.) It will fill our Souls with reverential Thoughts
and awful Apprehensions of God and his adorea-
ble Perfections, particularly of his Holiness and Jus-
tice, which in their Lustre shine forth in the Suffer-
ings of our Blessed Saviour. Can we behold Christ
dying the ignominious and cursed Death of the Cross,
and not have lively and awful Thoughts of God ?
It cannot be, considering how near in relation Christ
is to him. Here you have the One and Only-begot-
ten of the Father, the express Image of his Person
and Glory, bleeding and dying under all the Rage
and Fury that Men and Devils could tell how to
heap upon him ; God stands by, sees, and beholds it,
as it were stripp'd of Bowels, without expressing
the least Pity and Compassion, as if his *Mercy was*
clean gone. And not only so, but he adds to his Grief
and Sorrow by withdrawing his supporting and
refreshing Presence, and leaving him to labour under
and to bear away all that Wrath that was due for
Sin, whereby *he trod the Wine-Press of the fierce Wrath*
of Almighty God alone : Which press'd him so hard,
as forc'd him in the Bitterness of his Soul to cry out,
My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me !

If. 63. 3.
Rev. 19.
15.

I am persuaded no Father on Earth could stand
by to see his only Son, the Son of his Love, so rent
and torn, but it would be as the rending of his own
Heart, and force him to vent his whole Compassion
for his Relief and Succour. But here you have Christ
suffering under the Imputation of the Sin of the
World ; and until that be fully aton'd for, expiated,
and done away by the Expence of his own Blood
most precious, impecable Holiness cannot behold
him with Delight : For the Prophet tells us, *God is*
of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, (i. e. with Impu-
nity ;) wherever he finds it, Holiness must and can-
not but punish it. Justice now finds it upon Christ ;
and he must either satisfy for it, or sink under the
Punishment of it, and then a World of Sinners must
ine-

Heb 1. 13.

inevitably Perish. Thus God in the Sufferings of his dearly beloved Son manifests his Hatred to Sin, the Purity of his Nature, his perfect Justice and Righteousness, which we cannot apprehend and behold but with Souls full of Awe and Reverence.

(3.) It will set the Heart on Mourning, work Sorrow and Compunction in the Soul, with Hatred to, and Resolution against Sin: It will thoroughly thaw our frozen Spirits, soften and mollify the most hard and stony Heart yea, dissolve the Stone in the Heart into a Fountain, yielding not only Drops, but Streams of penitential Sighs and Tears. *Moses's* speaking to the Rock could not have been more effectual for fetching out the abundant Waters thereof, than a believing Sight of Christ in his humbled State would be to set the Heart on mourning. How did a Sight of Christ, after *Peter* had so basely denied his Lord, bring him to a remembrance of, and weeping bitterly for his Sin? Is it possible think you, to behold a Friend, much less so loving a Saviour, so us'd and abus'd, passing thro' such a Train of Sufferings as he endur'd? Consider how treacherously he's betray'd, violently seiz'd, hurried before the Priests and Elders, his profess'd Enemies, by whom he's taunted, contradicted, vilify'd, spit upon, buffeted, accused, condemned, cruelly scourged, crown'd with Thorns, and at last crucified between two Thieves, as if he had been some bloody Villain, and the most notorious Offender: I say, can you possibly behold your Lord thus insulted, your Saviour thus tragically treated; can you behold him on the Cross, groaning under exquisite Pain and deep Anguish, bleeding and dying, and not mourn and weep (if it were possible) Tears of Blood! With what aking Hearts, weeping Eyes, and sorrowful Countenances, may we suppose those few of his Friends who attended him to, and saw him on the Cross, did behold him? Certain it is, a believing Sight of Christ will cause us sadly to reflect on our selves and Sins, as he was oppress'd by them, and to grieve and mourn to see him thus handled for our sakes. The Lord has foretold by his Prophet that it

shall be so, That Men shall mourn over him whom they have pierced. And since it will have so happy an Effect upon us, as to set us on mourning for our Sins, Behold the Man! Zech. 12. 10.

And not only so, but it will fill the Soul with hatred to, and Resolution against Sin. If we enquire into the Cause of his Sufferings, we shall find it was to expiate, and satisfy for our Sins, not his own; for he had none to account for; and the greatness of his Sufferings discovers to us the Enmity that is in Sin; as nothing could satisfy for it but the Blood of the Son of God, the Death of the Redeemer. Our Redemption and Reconciliation are purely Fruits of the Blood of the Cross: Therefore that Sight which sets the Heart on mourning for Sin, will fill them with Hatred to it. If any thing can, surely a Sight of Christ under his tragical Usage will make us, with the Penitent, *to strike on the Thigh, and say, what have we done?* And since we have done amiss, to resolve to do no more. It will be so, unless from a Delight in Sin we are pleas'd in tormenting of, and repeating so bloody a Scene over again on the Person of so loving a Saviour; which God forbid! But,

(4) It will raise in us strong Love and Affection to Christ. If it be a Property of Love to beget Love, (as doubtless it is) then here's that in Christ to be seen which cannot fail to work Love in those Souls that behold him in the Glass of the Gospel, which so fully acquaints us what he hath done and suffered for us. Was it not Love to us that brought him out of the Bosom of his Father, to disrobe himself of his Glory, to come down from Heaven, and take our Nature to him, in which he kept the whole Law, and fulfill'd all Righteousness for us? And tho he was perfectly innocent, and universally good and profitable, yet how was he maligned, reproached, and ill treated by the mad and merciless Jews; all which he bore with admirable Patience, not from Weakness, but Love? For had he been pleas'd to have exerted his Power, he could have tumbled the World into Confusion, have baffled his proudest Enemies, and sav'd him-

himself from the cursed Death. But, alas! we must then have died in our Sins, and been miserable for ever: Therefore out of Love to us he willingly suffered whatever was inflicted. And it was such a Love
 John 15. 13. he express'd therein, as never was or ever will be parallel'd: It's greater than the greatest Love among
 2 Cor. 5. 14. Men; and shall we not love him? Yea, the Apostle
 1 John 5. 14. and Saints of his Day tell us, saying, *The Love of Christ constrains us: And we love him, because he first loved us.*

I have read, That *Martha* had often courted her Sister *Mary* to go with her to hear Christ, and could not prevail. But in the Course of her Importunity, she attack'd her thus, saying, Sister there is one to preach to-day in the Temple, who is a most comly and handsome Man, and mighty both in Word and Deed. Whereupon after a little Pause, she resolves to go; and accordingly did, and sat down just before the Place from whence he was to Preach, purposing to have a full Sight of him. She beheld him intently; and the Sight of him, with what proceeded from his gracious Mouth, fill'd her Soul with a strong and lasting Love unto him. I grant that many may cast a careless Eye upon, and take a transient View of him; but for want of a discerning Faculty (I mean Faith) they can see no Form nor Comeliness in him. As to
 Il. 53. 2. the natural Eye, he appears but as a Root out of dry Ground, and is seemingly void of every Thing desirable. While Men are ignorant of him, they slight him as the Daughters of *Jerusalem* did, demanding of the Spouse, on her passionate Enquiry after him, and the solemn Charge she gave 'em, That if they saw her beloved, to tell him that she was sick of
 Cant. 5. 9. Love; but say they with a Slight, *What is thy Beloved more than another's Beloved?* Hereupon she describes him so well as she could: And tho it was but a faint and imperfect Representation she gave of him, yet their Hearts were so fir'd with Love, and so entirely overcome by the Description she gave, that
 Ch. 6. 1. now they are desirous of nothing more than to seek him with her. Thus it's evident that a believing Sight of Christ will work Love and Affection in the Soul

Soul to him. Therefore *behold the Man!* since we cannot apprehend him, but we love him.

(5.) It will mightily excite us to resemble him whom we Love; and dispose us lovingly to the Imitation of him who was a perfect Example in all Righteousness: This will render us fruitful in all Goodness, and furnish us abundantly with *Joy and Peace in believing*. O how will our Love be raised towards God for his Grace in giving us such a Redeemer as Christ! With what Courtesy and Respect shall we carry it to Men of all Ranks? How powerfully will his Example dispose us to Meekness and Gentleness under provocations, and to Humility under all exterior Advantages? How little will the World be, and the Glories of it, in our Eye? And with what Quietude of Spirit shall we sit resign'd to the disposing will of God, and govern our selves like the Disciples, who behaved themselves in their Words and Actions with such an unusual and extraordinary Air, that the People could not but acknowledge *that they had been with Jesus*, and had learned of him? and as from him they received their Knowledge and Learning, so by his Example they are render'd unbleameable and serviceable in their whole Behaviour, to the glory of God, and good of Men. And more especially, how calm and patient will it make us under all those Evils we justly suffer for our own Sins, when we consider how calm and quiet he was under all those Contumelies, Reproaches, and Miseries he suffer'd, not for his own sake, but for ours? *Though he was revil'd, he revil'd not again; when he suffer'd, he threaten'd not; but committed himself to God, who judgeth righteously.* It was a sight of God that made *Aron hold his peace*; that made *Eli*, in a very hard Case, to say, *Let him do what seemeth him good*; that made *David* dumb, and silenc'd all captious and peevish Reasoning about his providential Proceedings; that made *Hezekiah*, on his receiving a terrible Message by the Prophet, to say, *Good is the Word of the Lord*; and made *Job* not only submissive, but thankful, though all be taken from him.

Act. 4. 13.

1 Pet. 2. 23.

Lev. 10. 3.

1 Sa. 3. 18.

Ps. 39. 2, 9.

Isa. 39. 8.

Job 1. 21.

But more than all this: A Beholding of Christ will

furnish us with a universal Charity, and make us generous and kind to them who cannot for any reason expect it from us; like our Lord, when he was encompass'd with a world of bloody Murderers, whose Hearts conceived Mischief, whose Tongues utter'd Blasphemies, and whose Hands were employed in multiplying their Barbarities, and encreasing his Miseries; on which account they neither expected nor desired Mercy and Favour from him: But notwithstanding their great Demerit, how does he express a surprising Charity for such implacable Wretches a few moments before he expires, in preferring a Petition for them, *Father forgive them for they know not what they do!* in which Words you have him not only interceding for Pardon, but apologizing for their Sin. What astonishing Love and Mercy is this? Nay, how confidently shall we trust in him, when we behold him a Conqueror in Death? Yea, how delightful in Duty, and frequent in Prayer, shall we be, on our beholding him a Mediator at God's Right-hand, presenting both us and our Services (if sincere) to his Father for Acceptance, in the Censer of his own Worthiness?

(6.) It will furnish us with a mighty Zeal for his Service and Glory: Not only render us calm and quiet under the Things we suffer, but it will make us resolute Opposers of all that are Enemies to Christ and his holy Religion, immovable under the most terrible Shocks, firmly to resist, and courageously to fight under his Banner, resolving the most furious Efforts the Powers of Darkness can make shall not shake us in our Love and Loyalty, in our Patience and Constancy for and to him, who loving us, *loved us to the End*. Thus it influenc'd that Heroick Servant of his, *Moses who esteemed the Reproaches of Christ* more than the Grandeur of courtly Honours and Pleasures of Egypt, *seeing him that is invisible*. Thus the Disciples repell'd all the Force of their Enemies, and resolv'd all their captious Reasonings, not valuing all their Threats and Menaces, telling 'em frankly, *That it was better to obey GOD than Man*. The High-Priest and others (their supreme Authority) strictly charge

Luc. 23, 24.

Heb. 11, 24.
15, 26, 27.

and command 'em to Preach no more in this Man's Name; but they, as became faithful Servants, plainly and boldly acquaint them, That *there was no other Name given under Heaven whereby Men can be saved, but the Name of Jesus Christ.* Nay farther for our Comfort, it will mightily support us under all Pressures and Burdens afflicting us; for tho' for a while we may joy in our Sufferings for the Name of Christ, yet length of Time, suffering under a Scene of Hardships, may perhaps make us weary, cause us to flag, and to draw back. But that we may be kept from the Power of such a Temper, and be preserv'd from fainting in an Hour of Temptation, the Apostle like a wise and tender Physician, proposes a Remedy that will never fail, which is, *To behold the Man, by considering him who endured the Contradiction of Sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your Mind.* This will make us firm and invincible in our Christian Course as well when an enraged Mob cry *Crucify him, crucify him!* as when they sing *Hosanna* unto him. Acts 5. 19.

(7.) It will render holy Souls impatient and restless for him, put us in quest of, and make us ardent in our Desires after him, who is clothed with Armour most ravishing, and is altogether lovely. We have been told it's our Duty to behold him as our Head and Forerunner, entring into Heaven for us, and as coming again from thence as our Judge and Rewarder; which Appearance of his will put an end to all our wearisome Marches, a happy Period to all our Conflicts: for tho' nothing can discharge us from warring with Temptations till he comes, yet then we shall hang up our Armour in token of Victory, and for ever triumph in that Salvation which Christ our Captain has obtain'd for us: Then shall we sit down with him on stable Thrones, with Crowns on our Heads, and Palms in our Hands, be uninterruptedly happy in a Region where there is no pricking Thorn nor scratching Briar to annoy or hurt us, but is perfectly calm and pleasant. The stedfast Belief of this does not only render pious Souls resolv'd and constant in Duty, but engages 'em in a patient looking and longing for the blessed Hope of his glorious Appearing. They never hear him in his Word, saying, *Behold I come quickly*; but they reply, *Amen, even so come Lord Jesus*; or with the Spouse, *Make haste, my Beloved; be thou like the Roe and young Hart on the Mountains of Sion.* Ch. 4. 12.

Thus we have shew'd you in part the happy Influence which a Beholding of Christ will have upon our Hearts and Lives; by which it appears to be no less our Privilege than our Duty. But before we end,

Let us consider what is said, and reflect upon our selves, as Examination is by the Appointment of our great Lord made both previous and necessary to Participation. If we eat the Bread, and drink the Cup in the Lord's Supper without diligent Search into our own Right and Title thereunto, we may pine and die at a full Table, or eat and drink to our own Destruction: Therefore let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup; either so, or not at all. Now in doing of this examine,

1 Cor. 11.
28

1. Your Faith; whether it helps you to look through the Signs to him who is signified thereby; and whether in the use of the Bread and Cup, you fix upon and apply the broken Body and Blood of Christ as the only Food and Nourishment of your Souls.

2. Examine your Love; whether it increases in proportion to the Sense and Assurance he affords you, in this Ordinance, of his Love, in telling you, *This is my Body broken for you; and this is my Blood shed for you.*

3. Examine your Desires of, and Likeness to him. Can you say of your Christ as David of his God, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee; and there's none on Earth I desire besides thee?* Does Communion with him work you up into the Likeness of him?

4. Examine your Purposes and Resolutions for him. It is not possible we should have stronger Obligations to him, nor greater Encouragements from him: Therefore can we say, with the Psalmist, *I have sworn, and I will perform to keep thy righteous Judgments?*

Psal. 73.
25.

Psal. 119.
106

In a Word; If we so behold him as to admire and praise him for the Condescensions of his Grace, to maintain awful Apprehensions of God, adoring his Perfections, particularly his Holiness and Justice, as well as his Grace and Mercy, in the Death of his Dearly-beloved; if it disposes us heartily to repent of all our Sins, by mourning over them, and resolving against them, and to an imitating of him in all Virtue, as a Fruit of our sincere Love and Affection to him; if it keeps us firm and steady in our Obedience to him, without fainting in Afflictions, and desirous of nothing more than an Enjoyment of him; then hold up your Heads with Joy, *Behold your Lord comes with Ten Thousands of his Saints.* And when he's come, though he will sadly destroy those wicked Husbandmen who said, *This is the Heir, come let us kill him, and the Inheritance shall be ours;* he will receive you with a Eulogy, or Well-done, as the Blessed of his Father; take you with himself to inherit a Kingdom, where you shall be happy above all Expression in an open and everlasting Vision of himself, singing in Consort with those blessed Hosts that attend the Royal Throne, *Hallelujahs* to him, who is and for ever will be the Ravishment of pious Souls. Therefore I conclude, as I began, *Behold the Man!*

Jud: 14

Mat 21 37
to 43